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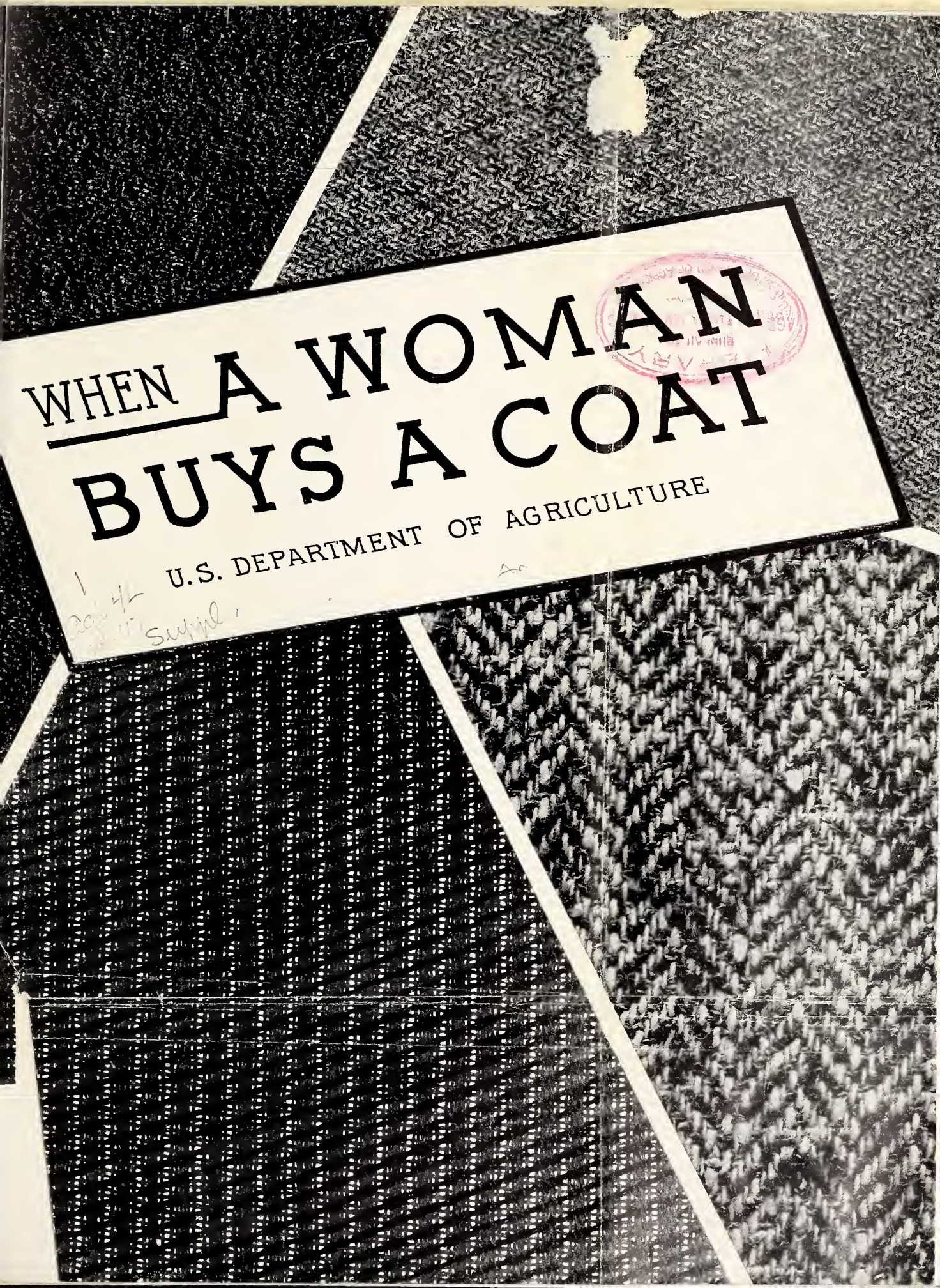
WHEN A WOMAN BUYS A COAT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



A PICTORIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

Quality Guides in Buying Women's Cloth Coats

Leaflet 117, United States Department of Agriculture

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WHEN A WOMAN BUYS A COAT

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Before shopping, she asks herself general questions like these:

What type of coat do I need?

Do I want it for dress, general wear, or sports?

How much can I afford to spend for it?

What color will harmonize best with my wardrobe?

How many years' wear must I get from this coat?

Which of the current styles is most becoming to my figure and likely to last for several seasons?

When shopping, she carefully checks on the points that make for coat quality and looks for informative labels that will give her definite facts about materials and workmanship.

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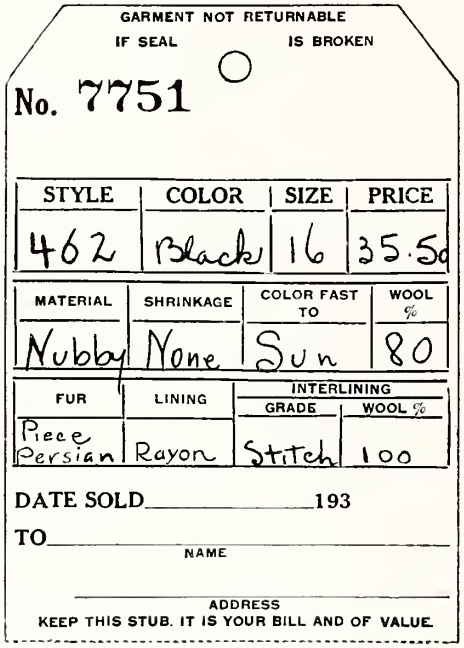
PRINTED FACTS

Tags of value give definite facts about the qualities of the cloth the purchaser cannot see—such as colorfastness, wrinkle resistance, shrinkage.

Tags of little value stress fancy names, give no definite facts, use general and vague terms.



GARMENT NOT RETURNABLE
IF SEAL IS BROKEN

No. 7751

STYLE	COLOR	SIZE	PRICE
462	Black	16	35.50

MATERIAL	SHRINKAGE	COLOR FAST TO	WOOL %
Nubby	None	Sun	80

FUR	LINING	INTERLINING	
		GRADE	WOOL %
Piece Persian	Rayon	Stitch	100

DATE SOLD_____193

TO_____
NAME

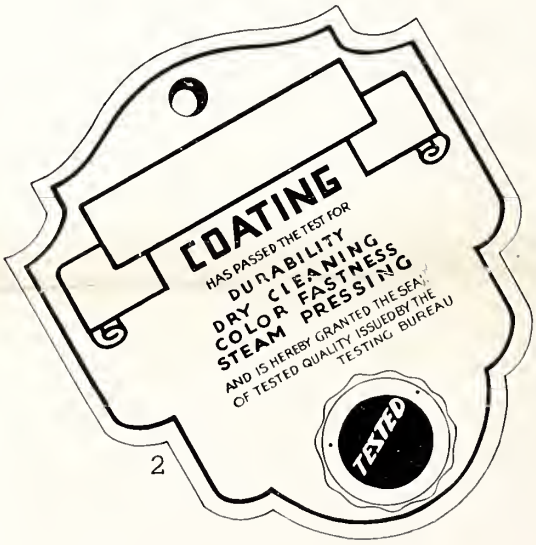
_____
ADDRESS

KEEP THIS STUB. IT IS YOUR BILL AND OF VALUE.

1

1 Good but incomplete.—This tag gives definite information—wool content, shrinkage, colorfastness. But what fibers make up the other 20 percent?

2 Indefinite.—This tag mentions several points of quality. But what were the standards behind the tests? For instance, to what is the color fast? To sun? Rain? Dry cleaning? Or all of these?



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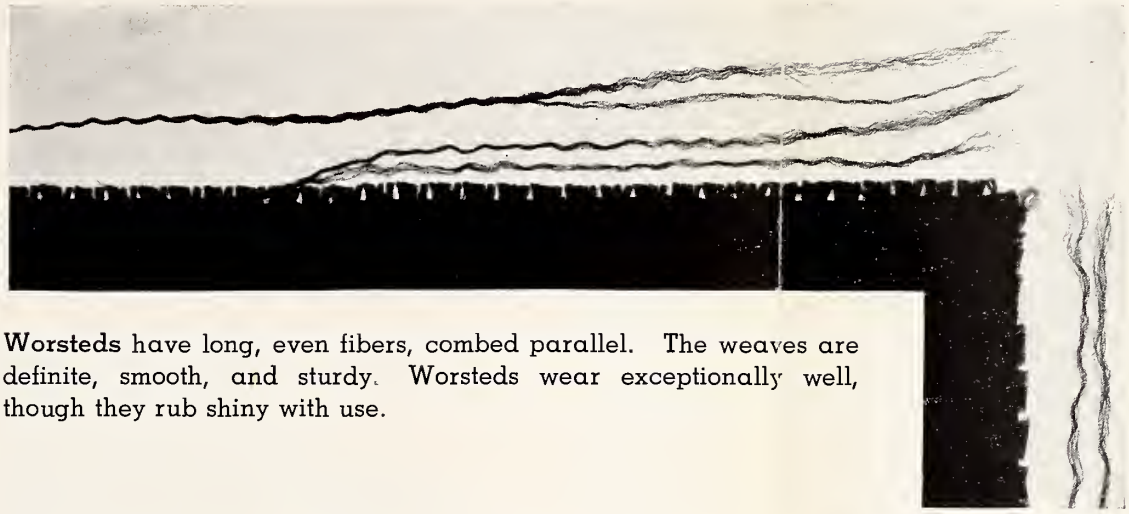
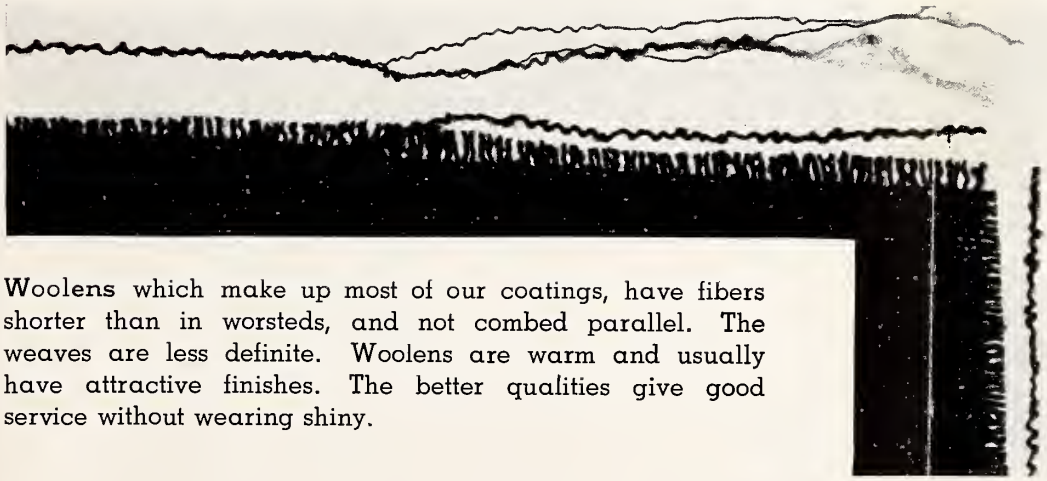
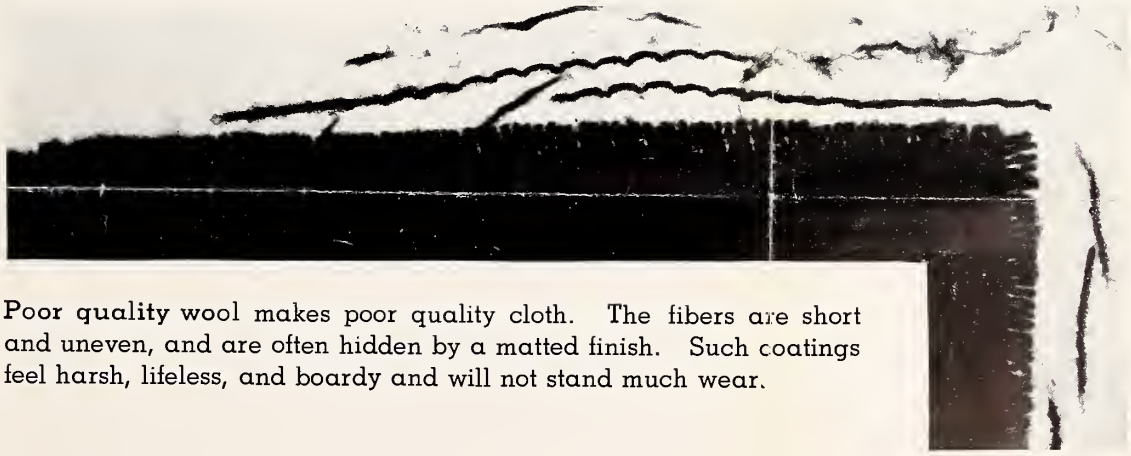
THE TYPE OF WOOL



Worsteds have long, even fibers, combed parallel. The weaves are definite, smooth, and sturdy. Worsteds wear exceptionally well, though they rub shiny with use.



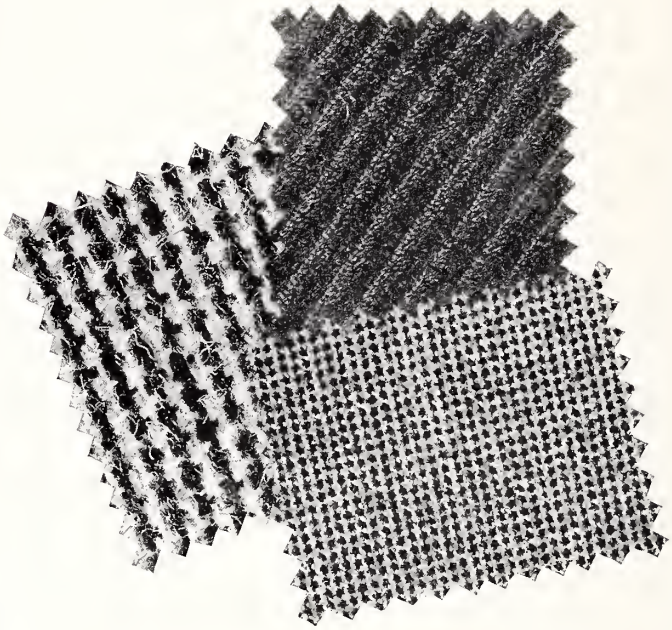
Woolens which make up most of our coatings, have fibers shorter than in worsteds, and not combed parallel. The weaves are less definite. Woolens are warm and usually have attractive finishes. The better qualities give good service without wearing shiny.



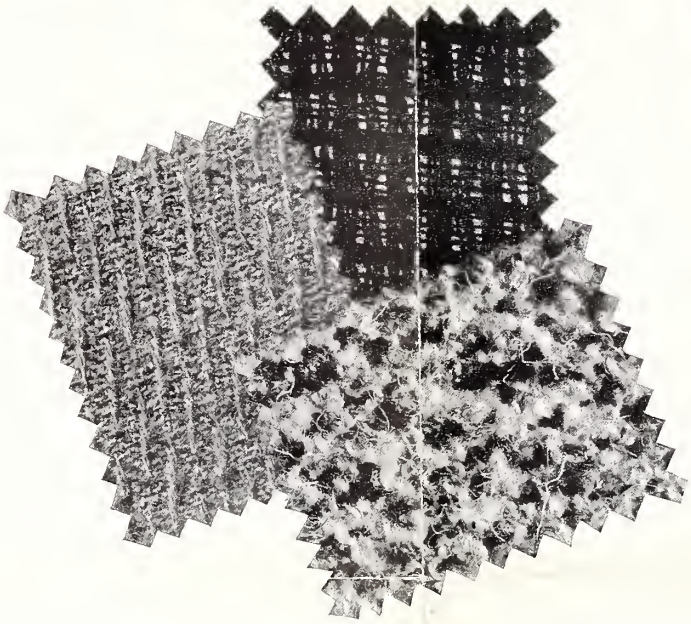
Poor quality wool makes poor quality cloth. The fibers are short and uneven, and are often hidden by a matted finish. Such coatings feel harsh, lifeless, and boardy and will not stand much wear.

THE WEAVE

Since weave has a pronounced effect upon the wearing quality of a coat fabric, it is well to examine it closely on the wrong as well as the right side.



Long-wearing weaves are firm and close, with about as many yarns in one direction as the other. The yarns are even in size, so the wear comes on them uniformly. The cloth has a soft, springy feel, and the give in either direction is not excessive.



Poor-wearing weaves are not closely woven and are likely to catch and snag readily. The yarns are often irregular in size and wear unevenly, and the warp and woof are not well balanced. The cloth soon loses its shape.

THE COAT LINING

The desirable coat lining is:

- As long wearing as the coat itself.
- Slippery in texture so as to make the coat easy to put on and take off.

- Proof against rain and perspiration stains.
- Preshrunk.

- Resistant to wrinkles.
- Of firm quality that will not pull at the seams.

- Practical, conservative, harmonizing color.
- Colorfast, so it will not fade.

Materials commonly used

Pure-dye silks—in crepe, satin, and occasionally brocade weaves. Good weights and firm weaves of these silks are long wearing, and better appearing, but more expensive than other lining fabrics.

Weighted silks—in the same weaves as the pure-dye silks. These are short-lived even in the best qualities. Some manufacturers now guarantee two seasons' wear, but the usual weighted silk lining is badly worn at the end of one season. Very poor qualities show wear within a few weeks.

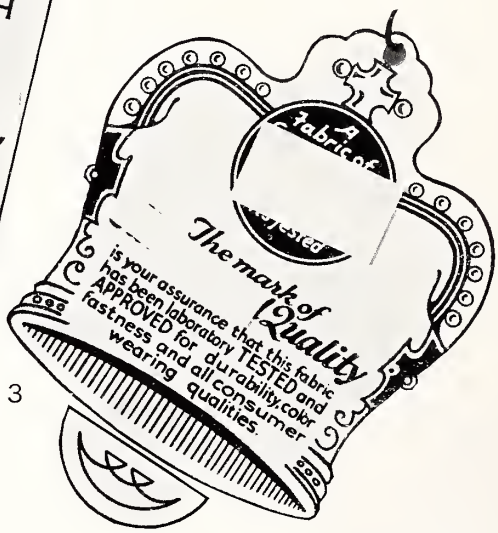
Rayons—in twill, crepe, satin, brocade, and plain weaves. The qualities vary, but one that is firmly woven and of good weight will give satisfactory service at low cost. They tend to wrinkle and to fray.

THE COAT LINING

Some labels give facts on the life expectancy and qualities of the lining. The purchaser should save these as a protection in case of unsatisfactory wear.

1

2



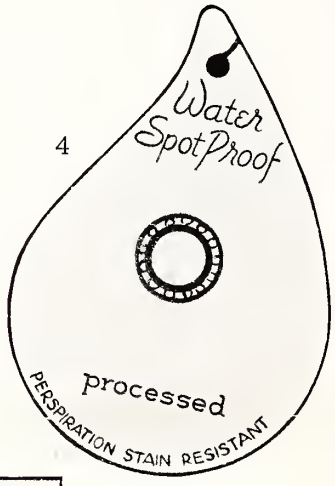
3

1 This tag states definitely the fiber content of the lining fabric. The wear guarantee, while indefinite, indicates good quality.

2 The wear guarantee is definitely stated so that the purchaser knows exactly what she can expect—even though two seasons is not long wear.

3 Facts about colorfastness and wearability are much to be desired but the information on this label is vague and incomplete.

4 and **5** Some linings are processed against water spots and perspiration stains and carry labels to that effect.



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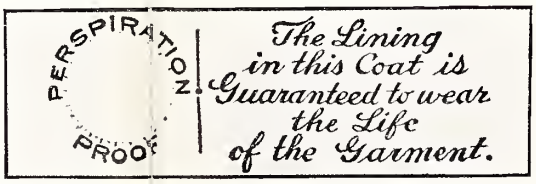
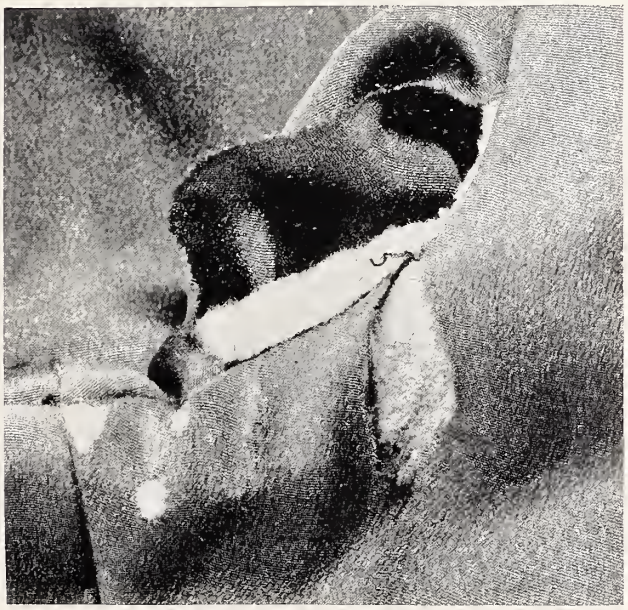


THE COAT LINING

1 Deep frayage and pulled seams are common in rayon linings, but damage can be avoided by generous seam allowances and close, well-adjusted stitching.

1



2

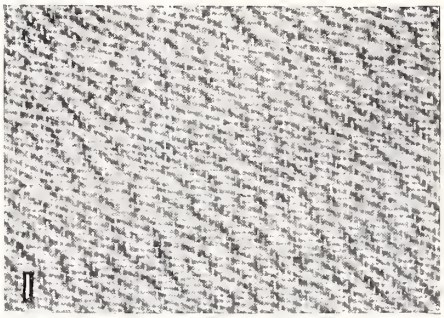
2 Heavily weighted silk often looks like this at the end of a few weeks or one season's wear. With no wear guarantee, the owner must stand the loss.

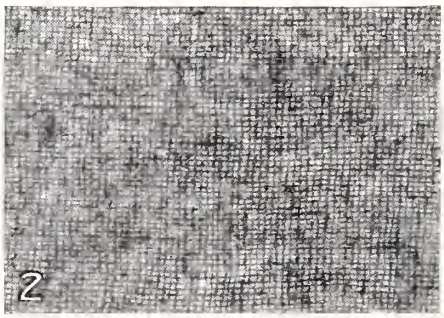
- Perspiration stains usually cannot be removed, but persons likely to damage their coats in this way can purchase perspiration-proof linings.

- Water spots can be removed only by cleaning, but they can be prevented by choosing linings resistant to water spots.

THE COAT INTERLINING

The interlining affects the warmth, weight, and appearance of a coat. If the coat is closed at the lower edge, ask the clerk to rip a place and let you see what the interlining is made of—whether it is lightweight, not bulky, or likely to shed excessive lint.

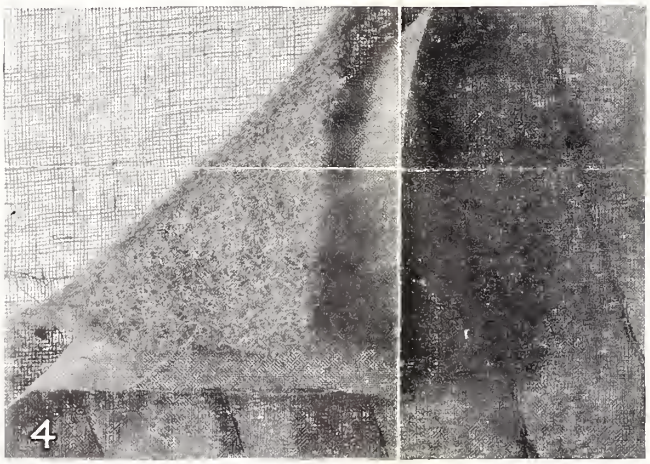




1 Napped-cotton interlining is lightweight, inexpensive—best suited to coats for mild climates or in-between seasons.

2 Wool fabrics made for this purpose are lightweight, warm, and not bulky.

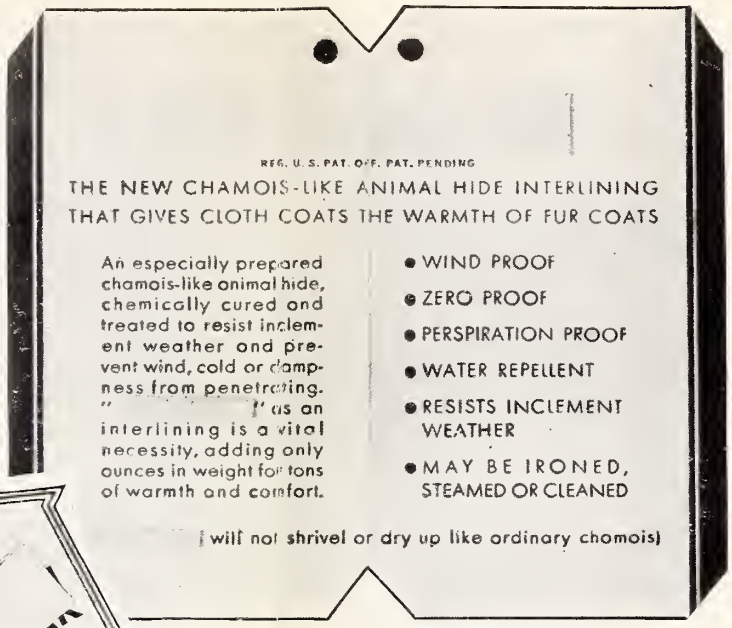
3 Chamois-like material is a new type of interlining made for exceptional warmth, especially useful as a windbreaker.



4 Quilted wool is warm but bulkier and heavier than the woven wools. The best qualities are made by quilting wool fibers between silk mull and thin cotton. Cheaper imitations substitute cotton fibers or heavy napped cotton cloth for the wool, and thin cotton for the silk mull.

THE COAT INTERLINING

1 This tag gives helpful statements about weather resistance, warmth, and weight of the interlining.



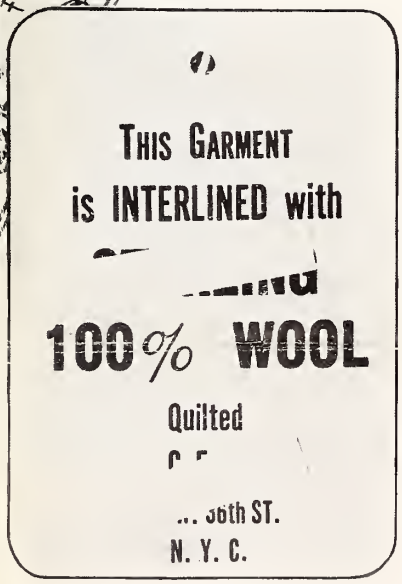
1

2 Of only slight help is this general statement because it gives no facts about fibers or material.

2

3

4



5

3 Tags on quilted interlinings are sometimes misleading. "Filling" is in smaller type than "all wool," thus giving the impression that the interlining is all wool.

4 This tag is definite and clear.

5 An inaccurate tag because only the filling is wool.

WORKMANSHIP

The wear in a coat depends quite as much on workmanship as on materials. So it is well to look for:

- Accurate cut with the grain of the cloth.
- Ample seams stitched evenly and stayed with preshrunk tape.
- Careful pressing at each step in construction.
- Matching thread used throughout.
- Lining and coat finished separately at the lower edge, and bar-tacked at the seams.
- Lining hand-felled to the coat.
- Facings blind-stitched to the coat.
- Generous pleat laid in at the center back of the lining.
- Buttonholes neatly and firmly worked.
- Front edge taped inside to preserve shape.
- Percaline stay through the shoulders.
- Pockets reinforced at the corners.

- Buttons sewed on with shanks sufficiently long to prevent strain on the cloth.
- Hem at the lower edge finished with ribbon tape and blind-stitched to the coat.
- Lower edge corners on the front finished by first making a continuous hem on the coat and facings, and then turning the facings back on the inside of the coat, leaving the lower edges unstitched.

ACCURATE CUT, PRECISE MATCHING

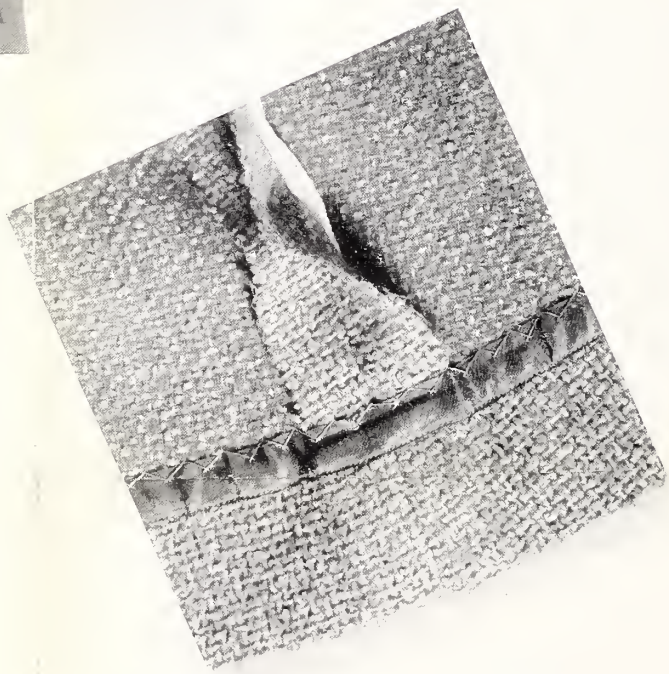
- If a coat is to keep its proper shape and good appearance, each part should be cut accurately with the right grain of the cloth, and then carefully matched.

Cut with the grain of the cloth and properly matched. Notice how well the coat hangs, and the even lap at the front (above).

Not cut with the grain of the cloth and not matched. Every crooked seam and edge of these coats and the sagging lining show the effect of slipshod workmanship.

SEAMING AND STITCHING

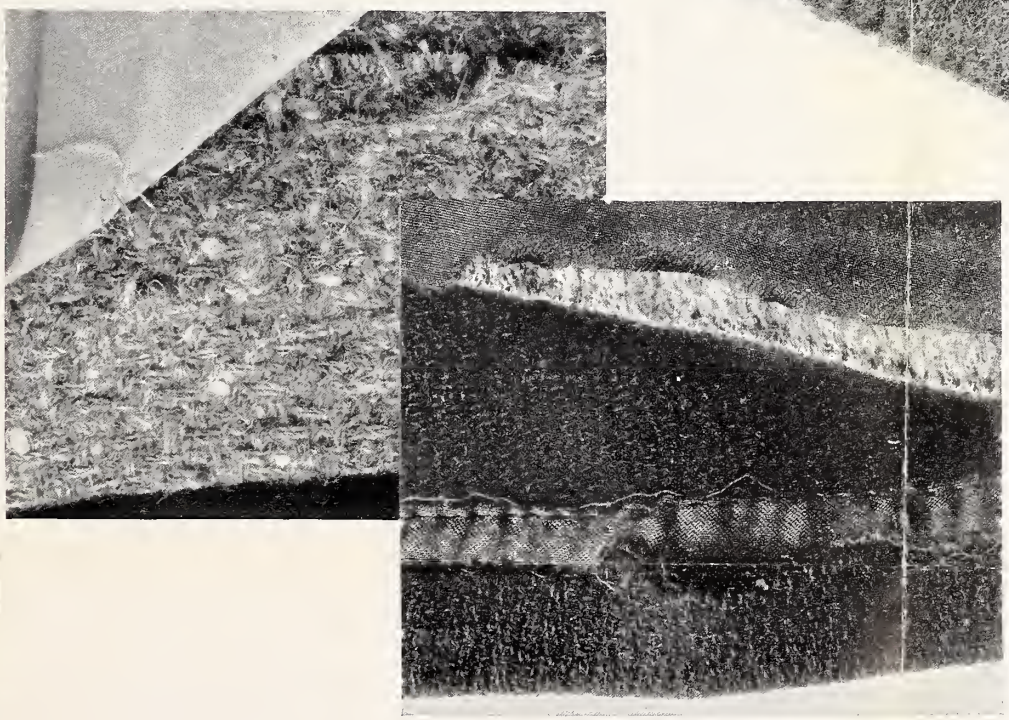
- Ample seam allowance is needed for the sake of appearance and security.
- Seams should be stayed with preshrunk tape to prevent stretching, and, as the garment is made, the seams should be pressed open and thoroughly steamed.
- The stitch should be adjusted to form a secure lock and should be of a length that suits the weight and texture of the cloth.
- Thread that is strong, matching in color, and fast to cleaning and sunlight adds to the serviceability of a coat.



THE COAT HEM

For straight hang, neat appearance, and simplified care, the hem of a coat must be:

- Hemmed separately from the lining.
- Finished with silk ribbon.
- Invisibly stitched to the coat.
- Stitched with strong thread, well fastened off.
- Joined to lining at seams with bar tacks.



Poorly made hems either have no ribbon finish or are made with a strip of cloth that pulls out readily.

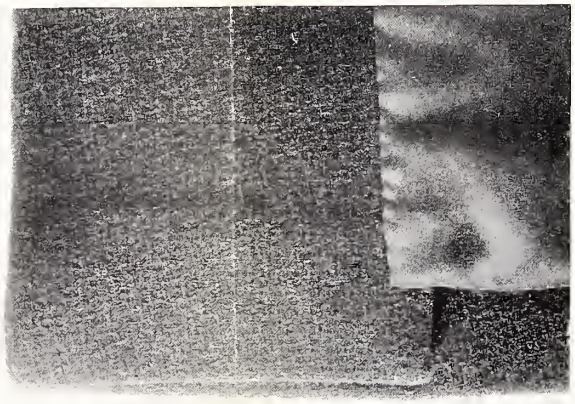
FINISHING DETAILS

1

1 A lining smoothly fitted into the coat and hand-sewed around the edges, armholes, and shoulders with invisible stitching is a mark of good construction.

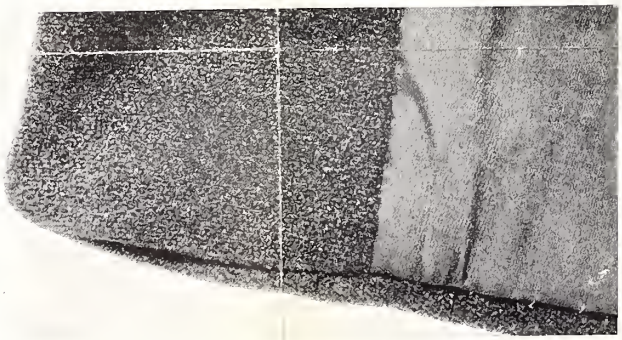
2

2 Front facings tacked back to the coat prevent the edge roll that spoils appearance.



3

3 A well-finished corner made with a continuous hem and left open at the lower edge.

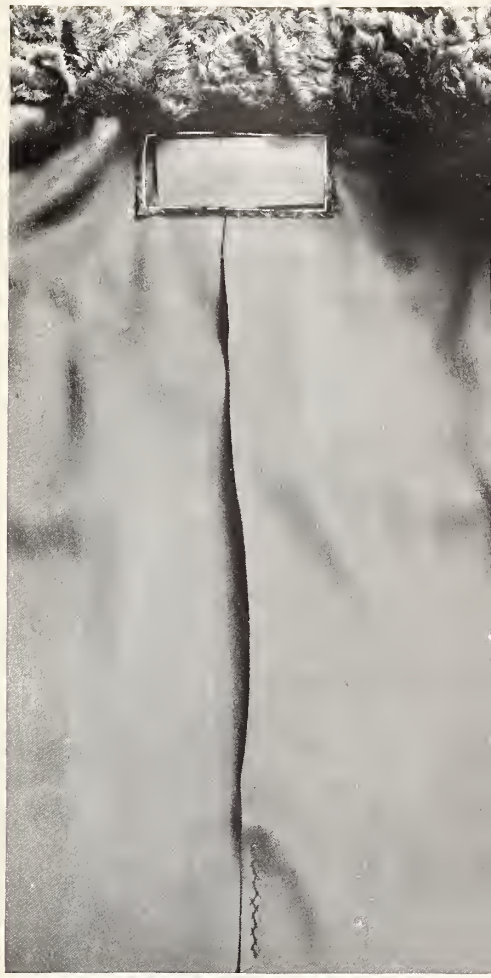


4

4 A poorly finished corner seamed at the lower edge. Looks bunchy and soon collects dirt and lint.

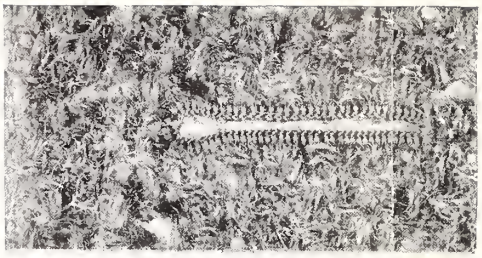
FINISHING DETAILS

- A pleat (right), about three-fourths of an inch deep and extending the full length of the coat, provides the give necessary to prevent pulling out around the armholes. Tacking at the waistline and the lower edge helps in holding the pleat in place.



- A short pleat or an unpressed seam at the center back is a common way of skimping on material in poor-quality coats. When made in this way, the lining often pulls and tears out quickly at the armholes.

BUTTONHOLES AND LOOPS

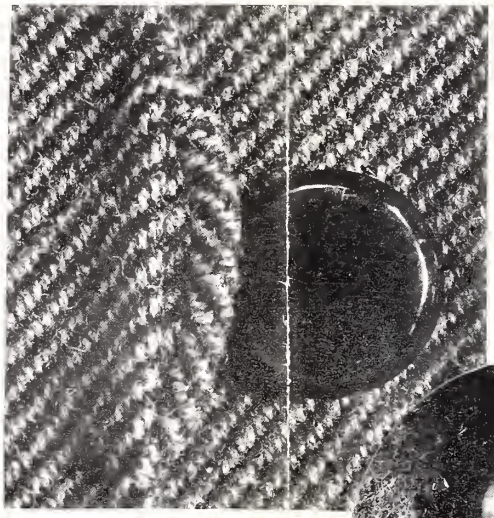


1

1 Worked buttonholes, to be firm and lasting, should be cut with the thread of the cloth, evenly worked with durable twist, and stayed with firm cotton fabric between the coat and the facing.

2

2 Bound buttonholes also should be cut with the thread of the cloth. The binding should be of even width and securely stitched, particularly at the ends and corners.



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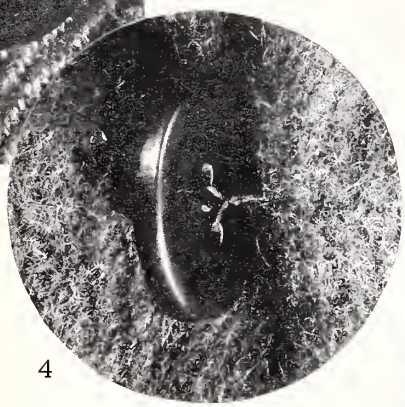
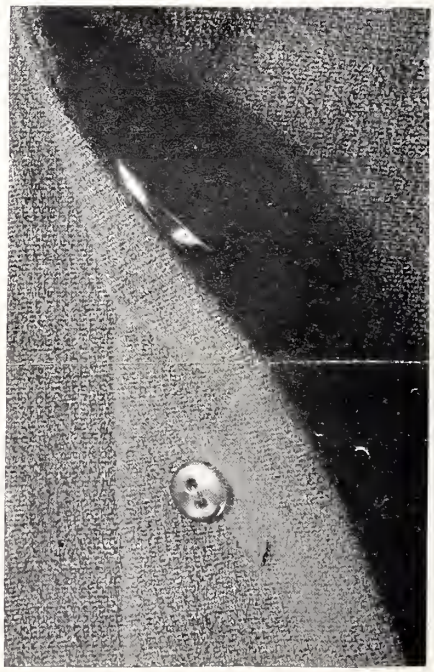
3 Loops are satisfactory if even in width, strengthened by inside cord, and securely caught in the edge seam of the coat.



4

4 A strong thread shank for the button prevents strain on both the buttonhole and the cloth of the coat.

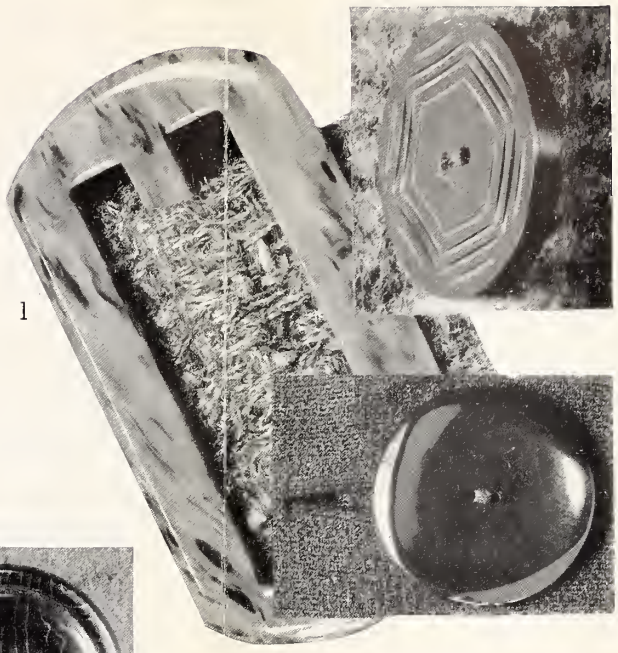


5

5 Small stay buttons underneath buttons keep them from pulling off and tearing the cloth.

BUTTONS AND BUCKLES

- Fastenings should be efficient, easy to manage, and sturdy. They should last throughout the life of the coat.



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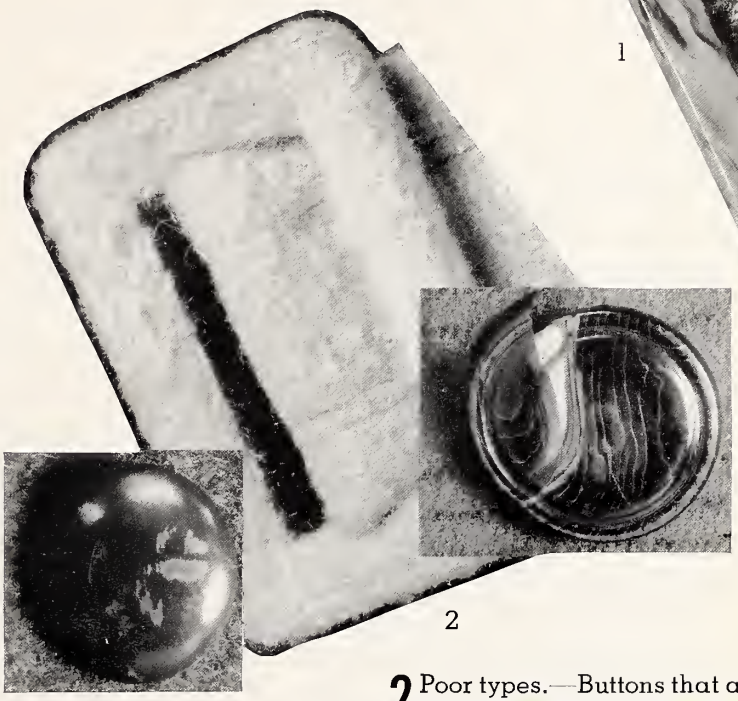
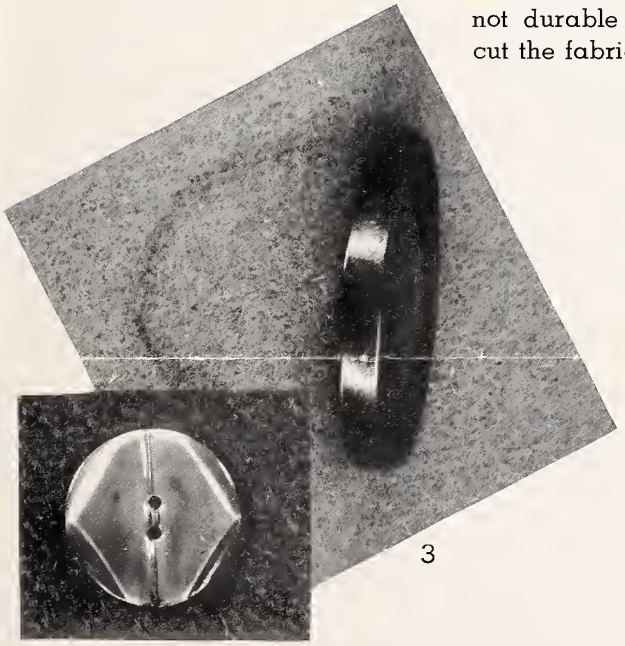


2

1 Good types of buttons and buckles are colorfast, simple in design, and have no rough edges.

2 Poor types.—Buttons that are painted soon scale off. Brittle ones break and chip easily.

Metal buckles covered with cloth are not durable as the sharp edges soon cut the fabric.



3

3 When fastenings are not colorfast they may stain the coat and permanently mar its appearance. An example of this is shown on the left, together with another type of button which fades so badly that it soon has to be replaced.

FUR TRIM

For a **dress coat** squirrel is luxurious and delicate in appearance. It is not a durable fur, but this type of coat is not subject to hard wear.

For an **all-purpose coat**, good qualities of Persian lamb and beaver are suitable and serviceable.

For a **sport coat**, muskrat is an example of hard-wearing fur. It combines well with tweeds and the other fabrics commonly used in that type of coat.

FUR TRIM

- The Federal Trade Commission has issued rules about the labeling of furs.

Resolved, That in determining what is proper and what is improper in the naming of furs, the following rules are hereby established:

RULE 1. In order to describe a fur, in every case the correct name of the fur must be the last word of the description, and if any dye or blend is used simulating another fur, the word "dyed" or "blended" must be inserted between the name signifying the fur that is simulated and the true name of the fur, as: "Seal-dyed muskrat", or "mink-dyed marmot."

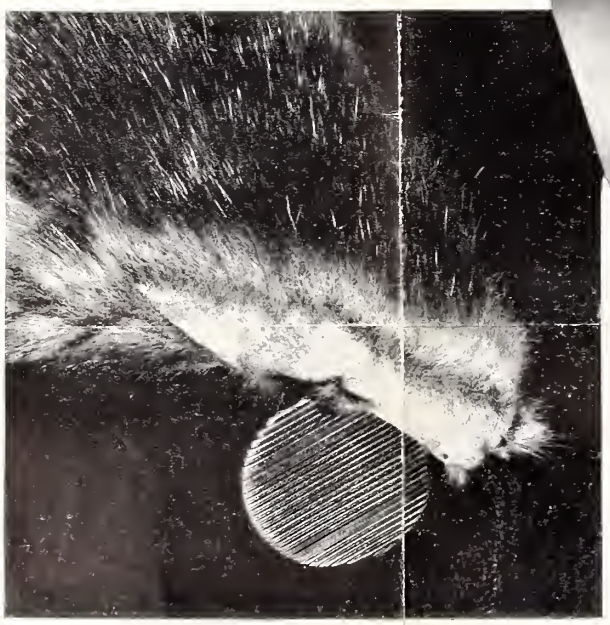
RULE 2. All furs shaded, blended, tipped, dyed, or pointed must be described as such, as: "Black-dyed fox", or "pointed fox."

RULE 3. Where the name of any country or section is used, it shall be the actual country of the origin of the fur, as "American opossum." Where the name of a country or place is used to designate a color, the fact shall be indicated, as: "Sitka-dyed fox."

Read the complete labels carefully. The descriptive names for furs are sometimes confusing.

FUR TRIM

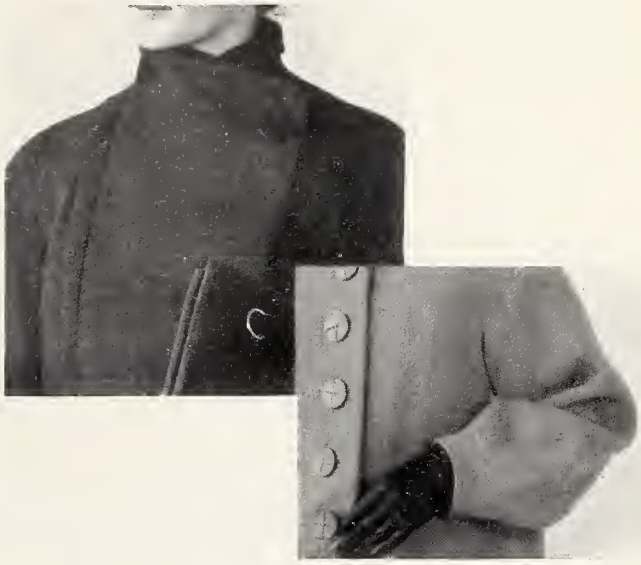
- Fur trim is often worn off a coat
  by the rubbing of—
  handbags—
  belts—
  buckles—
  buttons—
  jewelry

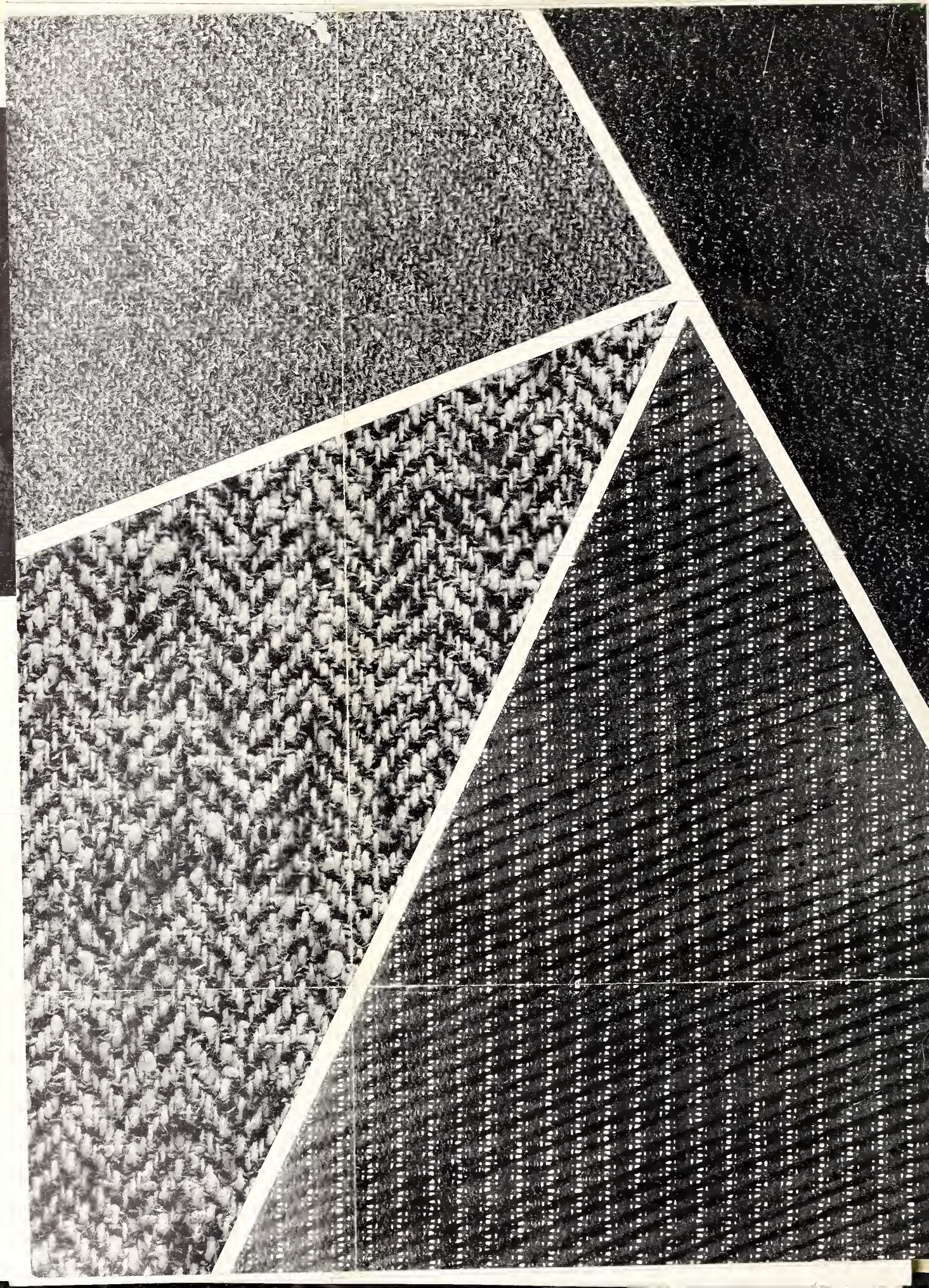


COAT DETAILS AFFECTING WARMTH

Features that add to the warmth of a coat:

- A button-up neck.
- Sleeves shaped to wrists.
- Straight skirt with wide lap.
- Good fastening, so coat will not blow open.



For less warmth:

- An open neck.
- Open, wide sleeves.
- Swagger skirt.
- Narrow lap.